

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY OSD/ISA:DUNLOP;EUR/RPM:REHFELD
APPROVED BY EUR:JGLOWENSTEIN
S/S-O:SSTEINER
SECDEF BROWN
EUR/NE:MR, CROWLEY

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
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USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061976

EXDIS - MILITARY ADDEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, OCON, AWACS, MILI

SUBJECT:NATO AEW: US VIEWS TO CONVEY TO MOD MULLEY

REFS: (A) STATE 060506, DTG 180600Z MAR 77

-- (B) LONDON 4513, DTG 181253Z MAR 77(NOTAL)

1. WE ARE TRANSMITTING SEPTEL A MESSAGE TO ALL NATO
CAPITAL EMBASSIES CONVEYING US POSITION FOR MARCH 25
SPECIAL DPC MINISTERIAL. OTHER MESSAGES COMMENT ON
SPECIFIC POINTS RAISED IN RECENT MESSAGES FROM USNATO.
THIS MESSAGE ADDRESSES SOLELY THE SPECIAL UK CONCERNS
SO COMPREHENSIVELY SET FORTH IN REF. B.

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2. FROM THE BEGINNING WE HAVE AGREED WITH THE BRITISH
ON THE NEED FOR A PROMPT ALLIANCE DECISION ON NATO AEW
AND TOGETHER WITH THEM HAVE ENERGETICALLY SOUGHT ONE.
WE HAVE ACCEPTED (AS THE FRG APPARENTLY HAS NOT) THE
REAL DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES ON UK MOD MULLEY
GENERATED BY THE NIMROD FACTOR. WE HAVE EARNESTLY SOUGHT
TO MEET THE MANY CONCERNS RAISED BY VARIOUS ALLIES IN

THE FINANCIAL EXPERTS' MEETINGS AND ELSEWHERE ON SUCH ISSUES AS COST-SHARING, E-3A CONFIGURATION, INDUSTRIAL COLLABORATION, POSSIBLE FRENCH PARTICIPATION, ETC. ALTHOUGH PROGRESS HAS NOT BEEN SO RAPID OR AS COMPREHENSIVE AS WE WOULD HAVE WISHED, SIGNIFICANT BREAK-THROUGHS HAVE

BEEN REGISTERED IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. TEN (10) OF THE THIRTEEN (13) PARTICIPANTS IN THE BRUSSELS DISCUSSIONS HAVE INDICATED (EITHER IN NEGOTIATIONS OR TO US PRIVATELY) WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN PROCUREMENT, AT LEAST TO SOME EXTENT. WE HAVE ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN PROGRAM COST, AT NO EXPENSE TO SYSTEM CAPABILITIES. EVEN WITHOUT THE STILL POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION OF FRANCE, A NATO AEW PROGRAM HAS EVOLVED WHICH WE BELIEVE ALLIED MINISTERS, ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, AND ALLIED LEGISLATURES CAN ACCEPT AND SUPPORT IF REPEAT IF THE EUROPEANS DO NOT LACK THE POLITICAL WILL. THE ANSWER TO A SERIOUS AND INCREASINGLY URGENT MILITARY REQUIREMENT FOR THE ALLIANCE IS THUS WITHIN THE GRASP OF DEFENSE MINISTERS.

3. HOWEVER, WE RECOGNIZE AND DO NOT MINIMIZE TROUBLESOME ISSUES WHICH REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED. THESE ARE PRIMARILY TWO: THE SELF-IMPOSED UK TIME FACTOR, AND THE FRG RELUCTANCE TO ASSUME THE 25/26 PERCENT COST SHARE WHICH WE BELIEVE TO BE REASONABLE AND FAIR. COST SHARE MATTER WAS ADDRESSED AT LENGTH LAST WEEK HERE WITH FRG MOD LEBER. ACCORDING TO EVERY INDICATION AVAILABLE TO US, LEBER LEFT HERE WITH FIRM INTENTION OF SEEKING TO CONFIDENTIAL

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OBTAIN THE CHANCELLOR'S AGREEMENT TO A POSITIVE STATEMENT BY LEBER AT THE 25 MARCH MINISTERIAL. IT WAS EQUALLY EVIDENT (AS WE REPORTED REF A) THAT LEBER WAS NOT CERTAIN HE COULD DELIVER AND THAT HE HAD THEREFORE UTTERED NO ASSURANCES. WE STILL AWAIT INFORMATION FROM BONN AS TO OUTCOME OF LEBER'S EFFORTS THERE. HOWEVER, INITIAL REPORTS FROM BONN REFLECT A VERY POSITIVE ECHO THERE OF THE OVERLAPPING GENSCHER-LEBER VISITS.

4. TURNING TO PAINFUL DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION IN WHICH MULLEY FINDS HIMSELF, THERE ARE OF COURSE SEVERE LIMITS TO DEGREE TO WHICH WE CAN OFFER BALM FOR INTERNAL POLITICAL TROUBLES OF THE PRESENT UK GOVERNMENT. WE HAVE PROVIDED AMPLE AND COGENT EVIDENCE OF THE OPERATIONAL SUPERIORITY OF THE AWACS OVER THE NIMROD. MULLEY AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE ALSO WELL AWARE OF SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE UK OF AN AWACS PROGRAM WHICH COULD IN THE LONG RUN EQUAL OR EXCEED ECONOMIC

ADVANTAGES OF NIMROD. ALTHOUGH PM CALLAGHAN APPEARS TO HAVE A STRONG AND INCREASINGLY APPARENT PRO-NIMROD BIAS, MULLEY COULD, SHOULD HE CHOOSE, MAKE TELLING POINTS IN DEFENSE OF NATO AEW (AWACS) BEFORE PARLIAMENT. ONE CAN ONLY REMIND THE UK THAT WASHINGTON KNOWS THAT HMG HAS EFFECTIVE AMMUNITION DESCRIBED ABOVE IN ITS LOCKER WHICH IT HAS NOT YET EXPENDED.

5. IT MIGHT HELP MULLEY BEFORE PARLIAMENT OR WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES TO REMIND HIM THAT THE US IS CURRENTLY MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT FOR MORE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR BILATERAL PROCUREMENT MOU. APPROVAL OF THE NATO AEW PROGRAM IS LIKELY TO ASSIST SIGNIFICANTLY IN THIS EFFORT, ESPECIALLY IN OUR DEALINGS WITH THE CONGRESS. FINALLY, AS WE ARE CONVEYING SEPTEL, WE HAVE AGREED TO OFFSET DIRECTLY ANY NATO AEW INDUSTRIAL COLLABORATION SURRENDERED BY THE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPANTS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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THE INTEREST OF OVERALL PROGRAM COST REDUCTION.

6. AS REF B SUGGESTS, WE SHOULD IN ALL FAIRNESS PROVIDE MULLEY WITH OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE OUTCOME OF THE 25 MARCH MINISTERIAL. WE REMAIN GUARDEDLY OPTIMISTIC. IT WILL BE FOR HMG TO JUDGE WHETHER WHAT EMERGES FROM THE MINISTERIAL WILL MEET HMG'S DOMESTIC POLITICAL NEEDS, BUT WE EARNESTLY HOPE IT WILL. OUR VIEWS ARE SET FORTH IN THE LETTER BELOW FROM SECRETARY BROWN TO MOD MULLEY, WHICH WE REQUEST YOU TRANSMIT TO HIM ASAP.

7. IN PROVIDING THIS LETTER TO MULLEY, EMBASSY SHOULD DRAW ON ALL RELEVANT MESSAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH AS CANDID A PICTURE AS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE ALREADY THOROUGHLY BRIEFED UK EMBASSY HERE ALONG THESE LINES.

8. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR FRED: RON SPIERS HAS TOLD ME OF YOUR CONCERNS REGARDING THE FORTHCOMING SPECIAL DPC MINISTERIAL ON NATO AEW, AND I WANTED TO SHARE WITH YOU MY VIEWS ON THE PROSPECTS FOR THAT MEETING.

(PARA) I BELIEVE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS WAS MADE DURING LAST WEEK'S MEETING WITH GEORG LEBER TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ALLIANCE-WIDE AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM BASED ON AWACS. HERR LEBER AND I AGREED THAT A GROWING SOVIET LOW LEVEL AIR THREAT EXISTS, THAT A RESPONSE IS REQUIRED, AND THAT AWACS PROVIDES THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM. IT IS MY FURTHER BELIEF THAT HE IS PERSONALLY PREPARED TO SUPPORT THE AWACS SYSTEM WITH HIS CABINET.

(PARA) WE ALSO NARROWED THE GAP ON THE COST SHARE ISSUE.
HOWEVER, IT HAS NOT BEEN CLOSED. I BELIEVE HERR LEBER
WILL ASK HIS COALITION COLLEAGUES IN THE BONN CABINET
TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING, BUT THE ISSUE MAY NOT BE RESOLVED
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BEFORE THE MARCH 25 MEETING.

(PARA) I DO NOT BELIEVE HERR LEBER WOULD SEE THIS AS AN
OBSTACLE TO A DECISION BY DPC MINISTERS TO RECOMMEND

NATO AEW "FOR ENDORSEMENT THROUGH NATIONAL PROCESSES,"
AS CALLED FOR IN THE DECEMBER 1976 DPC COMMUNIQUE. GIVEN
SUCH A FAVORABLE POLITICAL OUTCOME, I WOULD NOT CONSIDER
THAT ANY OF THE REMAINING DETAILS SHOULD OR WILL PREVENT
THE SUCCESSFUL ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATO AEW PROGRAM.

(PARA) IN SUM, I BELIEVE THERE IS A REASONABLE CHANCE
THAT AT OUR MEETING ON MARCH 25 MINISTERS WILL AGREE
TO PRESENT AWACS FOR ENDORSEMENT THROUGH NATIONAL
PROCESSES--REASONABLE ENOUGH FOR ME TO COME TO
BRUSSELS.

(PARA) AS I UNDERSTAND IT, UNDER YOUR GOVERNMENTAL
SYSTEM YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMMIT YOUR GOVERNMENT
TO AWACS ON THE 25TH BUT WOULD BE ABLE TO STATE YOUR
INTENTION TO BRING IT BEFORE THE CABINET. I THINK
THAT A PRUDENT MAN WOULD SAY THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE
THAT OTHER MINISTERS, INCLUDING THE MAJOR PROCUREMENT
PARTNERS, WILL BE READY TO DO AT LEAST THAT MUCH.

(PARA) I TRUST SUCH A FORTHRIGHT ENDORSEMENT OF THE
NATO AEW PROGRAM BY DEFENSE MINISTERS ON MARCH 25
WOULD MEET THE NEEDS OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT, THUS
ALLOWING THE UNITED KINGDOM TO PARTICIPATE FULLY WITH
YOUR FELLOW ALLIES IN THIS PROGRAM OF SUCH VALUE TO
NATO'S COLLECTIVE DEFENSE.

(PARA) I SHOULD BE PLEASED TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS.

(PARA) SINCERELY,

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(SIGNED) HAROLD BROWN.

END TEXT. SIGNED TEXT FOLLOWS.

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Message Attributes

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